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General

Alleged conversion of a Hindu temple in Salem district into a Catholic church.

* 432 *Q.*—Mr. K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder: Will the Hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the Roman Catholic missionaries in Salem district have converted an Adi-Dravida Hindu temple into a church in Mettupalaiyam of Kumaramangalam estate, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem district;

(*b*) whether any complaints or representations have been made to the Government or to other local officials in the matter; and how they have been disposed of; and

(*c*) whether the temple still continues as a church or whether it has again been reconverted into a Hindu temple?

A.—(*a*) The information available with the Government is as follows:—

The Adi-Dravidas of Mettupalaiyam village, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem district, have been converted to Roman Catholicism. The village has been in existence for the last 50 or 60 years and the Mariamman temple in it was built by the Adi-Dravidas of the village. It was not used by the Adi-Dravidas of any other village or by the caste-Hindus of the place for their worship. There was no image in the temple but only a stone which was worshipped by the Adi-Dravidas. This and other articles of the old Mariamman temple are now kept inside the buildings. Apparently the building was converted into a church by the converts.

(*b*) A copy of a resolution passed by the Hindu Association, Nagore, protesting against the conversion of the temple was received by the Government. No action was taken in the matter as none was considered necessary.

(*c*) The Government have no information.

Mr. K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder:—" In the answer it is stated: ' It was not used by the Adi-Dravidas of any other village or by the caste Hindus of the place for their worship. Am I to understand, Sir, that the Government mean that the public temple of a place cannot be a public property of all the people unless used day to day by people of other places also? "

The Hon. Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam:—" I believe a temple can be private property just as much as any other property ; the information of the Government is that that building which was used as a place of worship was used exclusively by the Adi-Dravidas of that particular village."

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Mr. K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder:—" What I ask is whether it is not public property in general? "

The Hon. Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam:—" There is involved a proposition of law which I am not prepared to expound now and here."

Rao Sahib V. I. Muniswami Pillai:—" It is stated in the answer: ' The village has been in existence for the last 50 or 60 years and the Mariamman temple in it was built by the Adi-Dravidas of the village.' Since it was constructed by the Hindu Adi-Dravidas, how can it become the property of Christian Adi-Dravidas? "

The Hon. Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam:—" The building was built by the Adi-Dravida residents of that village when they were Hindus for the purpose of using it as a place of worship, and when they became Christians, they are also using it as a place of worship."

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—" Is it not after all a judicial civil matter in which the Government should not interfere? "

The Hon. Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam:—" They are not interfering, Sir."

Diwan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar:—" With regard to the statement that there was no image in the temple but only a stone which was worshipped by the Adi-Dravidas, may I know whether it is not a fact that stones in the shape of images and lingams are being worshipped by the caste Hindus as Gods and whether Government realize it? "

The Hon. Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam:—" We do not say that it was not a temple. We do admit that it was being used as a place of worship."

Electricity

Insertion of a condition in the electric licences issued to private bodies for the development of rural areas.

* 433 *Q.*—Mr. U. C. Subrahmanya Bhatt: Will the Hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that in the North Arcot, South Arcot, Salem, Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts, private bodies have applied for electric licences covering large rural areas, though in such licences the compulsory areas proposed to be developed by them consist of only a few streets within the municipal or union limits; and

(*b*) whether, before granting the licence in future, the Government propose to impose any restriction on private licensees insisting on them to develop rural load according to an annual programme fixed by the Government?

A.—(*a*) Yes, except in the South Arcot district for which a licence has already been granted.